



# Governing Body

356th Session, Geneva, 23 March–2 April 2026

## Institutional Section

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**Date:** 16 March 2026

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Nineteenth item on the agenda

## Reports of the Director-General concerning institutional matters

### Second report: Obituaries

#### ► Mr Michel Barde

1. The Director-General announces with deep regret the death, on 5 February 2026, of Mr Michel Barde, former Employer member of the Governing Body from Switzerland. He died at the age of 83.
2. Mr Barde was a member of the Governing Body from 1995 to 2011 and served as the Employer spokesperson in the Programme, Financial and Administrative Committee. He was also Employer Vice-President of the International Labour Conference at its 96th Session (2007) and Regional Vice-President for Europe of the International Organisation of Employers. In these capacities, he contributed actively to tripartite dialogue and helped shape the Employers' positions on key international labour issues.
3. Mr Barde served for 25 years as General Secretary of the *Fédération des Entreprises Romandes*, where he played a central role in representing and strengthening the voice of enterprises in French-speaking Switzerland. Earlier in his career, he worked for the International Committee of the Red Cross, reflecting his long-standing commitment to international engagement and public service.
4. Colleagues remember him as a thoughtful and principled advocate of social dialogue, firmly committed to cooperation between governments, employers and workers. His experience, steady leadership and constructive approach earned him wide respect within the international employers' community.

## ► Mr Firmin Ayessa

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5. The Director-General announces with deep regret the death, on 17 February 2026, of Mr Firmin Ayessa, Minister of State for Civil Service, Labour and Social Security of the Congo, a country that is currently a deputy member of the Governing Body.
6. In performing his duties, Mr Ayessa proved to be a passionate advocate for the values of decent work and social protection. He worked tirelessly to strengthen labour institutions, promote decent working conditions and foster dialogue between all stakeholders, thereby contributing to lasting improvements to the situation of workers in his country.
7. During the 113th Session (2025) of the International Labour Conference, he participated in the Annual Forum of the Global Coalition for Social Justice, an ILO-led initiative aimed at strengthening international cooperation and fostering more inclusive social development. Representing the Congo with dedication as a deputy member of the Governing Body, he presented with clarity his country's vision for accelerating progress towards social justice, particularly for young people and women. Under his guidance and leadership, the Congo was designated as a pilot country for the Global Coalition in Africa, notably for the implementation of the key intervention on tackling inequalities.
8. His steadfast commitment to ILO principles and his contributions to the work of the ILO will be remembered by those who had the privilege of working with him on these crucial issues.

## ► Mr Georges Kombo Ntonga Boone

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9. The Director-General announces with deep regret the death, on 6 November 2025 at the age of 85, of Mr Georges Kombo Ntonga Boone, former Worker member of the Governing Body, from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
10. Mr Kombo Ntonga Boone served on the Governing Body from 1990 to 1993. In that capacity, he actively contributed to its work, speaking with conviction on behalf of workers and defending the principles of social justice, social dialogue and international solidarity.
11. As General Secretary of the National Union of Workers of Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo) (UNTZA), he played a central role in organizing and representing workers during a pivotal period in his country's history. Throughout his career, he distinguished himself by his unwavering commitment to workers' rights, social progress and the strengthening of labour institutions.
12. As the founder of the Union of Consumers of Zaire and the National Confederation of Non-Governmental Organizations (CONOCO), he worked tirelessly to promote civic engagement, social justice and collective empowerment. His commitment at the intersection of the trade union movement and civil society reflected his deep belief in the transformative power of organized labour and civic engagement.
13. His unwavering commitment to the values of human dignity, respect and solidarity, as well as his integrity and sense of service, will be remembered by those who had the privilege of working with him.